



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

In mid November Governor Janet Napolitano led an Arizona delegation to the Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC) Plenary Session in Ciudad Obregon, Sonora. AOT is always honored to be a part of this biannual delegation. We met with members of the Tourism Committee to discuss several topics including the expansion of the Lukeville/Sonoyta Port of Entry (POE). The port was built more than 20 years ago and is not large enough to handle the amount of visitors who go to Rocky Point (Puerto Peñasco) and return to Arizona on holidays and weekends.

The Tourism Committee, which includes tourism industry leaders from both Arizona and Sonora, created the Lukeville/Sonoyta Port of Entry Master Planning Committee after the AMC's Summer Plenary Session last June. This is a unique situation as the committee is a bi-national group of federal, state and local stakeholders working on a bi-national, public/private effort to ease congestion at the Lukeville/Sonoyta POE. The project is currently in the planning and funding stages and in an effort to help fund the expansion project, the Arizona State Transportation Board approved a request for \$1.5 million that will be matched by \$1 million from the Rocky Point Sonora Developers. These funds will be used to construct two additional lanes at the Lukeville/Sonoyta POE. Since this project is in the early planning stages, AOT will keep you up-to-date on developments.

The Tourism Committee also discussed the Sonora Office of Tourism and AOT's progress in geotourism and gave updates on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) and Arizona's enhanced 3-in-1 driver's license, which is scheduled to be available in September 2008.

For more information, please visit [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## **AOT News Flash**

### **Arizona Tourism University (ATU) Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy Workshop**

ATU, the educational outreach program created by the Arizona Office of Tourism, is designed to educate statewide tourism organizations on tried and true tourism marketing tactics and the latest developments in the industry. The ultimate goal of ATU is to give communities the tools and resources they need to successfully develop their own tourism programs and to effectively work in partnership with AOT. The “How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy” is a dynamic session that will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at [smartins@azot.gov](mailto:smartins@azot.gov) or by phone at 602-364-3687.

#### **December 5, 2007**

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Hotel Valley Ho  
6850 East Main Street  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

#### **December 13, 2007**

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Cochise College Benson Campus  
Room 113  
1025 State Route 90  
Benson, Arizona 85602

## **Trippin' with AOT**

### **AOT Attends Ontario Motorcoach Association Annual Conference and Marketplace**

OMCA, held in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, November 11-14, is one of the largest travel and tourism-related associations in Canada, and serves as the voice of private sector bus operators, inter-city bus lines, and charter and coach tour companies. The annual conference is an event that brings together travel buyers from Ontario and the Northeastern U.S. and U.S. and Canadian travel suppliers for several days of one-on-one appointments and educational seminars. This

year's conference attracted more than 80 buyers and 400 travel sellers. Jennifer Sutcliffe, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager and Richard Eve, AOT's Canada representative met with more than 20 operators to promote Arizona, provide itinerary suggestions and announce what's new around the state. The National Geographic Geotourism Mapguide as well as Arizona Origins was of particular interest to operators as a way to incorporate a new cultural component to their programs. A full event report will be available soon. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at [jsutcliffe@azot.gov](mailto:jsutcliffe@azot.gov).

## Industry News

### International Visits, Spending Up in August

The Commerce Department says 5.3 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in August, an increase of 15 percent over August 2006. Total visitation for the first eight months of 2007 was up 9 percent from the same period in 2006. International visitors also spent 10.3 billion during the month, up 14.2 percent from August 2006 and \$78.2 billion year-to-date, up 10.3 percent from the first eight months in 2006. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, were up 16 percent over August 2006 and were up 9 percent for the first eight months of the year. Details at [www.tinet.ita.doc.gov](http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov). (*Special to TA*)

### Industry Takes Travel Concerns to the Polls

The Travel Industry Association, National Tour Association and the Travel Business Roundtable--organizations that are lobbying for legislation that would create the first-ever major U.S. tourism marketing program aimed at international travelers--took their concerns to presidential primary voters in South Carolina and Florida. According to a survey conducted for the travel groups by Alexandria, Va.-based Ayers McHenry & Associates of 1,200 likely Republican and Democratic presidential primary voters in these two states, travel emerges as a bipartisan issue. A total of four surveys were conducted, with 300 Democrats and 300 Republicans canvassed for each during the week of Oct. 24-29. The results, which travel industry representatives discussed with the media during a conference call Monday, indicated that while travel- and tourism-related issues so far have not entered the national presidential debate, they nevertheless resonate with voters. Overall, nine out of 10 potential presidential primary voters in Florida and South Carolina responding to the survey recognize travel and tourism as important to their states' economy, and eight out of 10 indicated travel was important in both their lives and the lives of their families. Air travel emerged as a major concern. The majority of Republicans and Democrats agreed that it is possible to reduce wait times at airports without reducing security, and that the federal government can do more to improve the travel process. (*Special to TA; Travel Weekly.com; Modern Agent.com, MiMegasite.com*)

### Study: Leisure Travel Up Despite Weakening U.S. Economy

Two out of three Americans plan to spend at least as much on leisure travel in the coming year despite any gloomy economic forecasts, reveals a new study. "The survey also shows serious interest in new niche travel such as adventure and volunteer trips," says the study by Deloitte. The vast majority of respondents, 95 percent, say they have taken a leisure/vacation trip in the last year, reveals the survey. "Many of these trips could be part of emerging niche travel segments," said Adam Weissenberg, Deloitte's U.S. Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure Leader. Almost half say they would like to, or currently do, take "adventure travel" trips, and more than one quarter would like to, or already do, participate in volunteer travel. "The travel landscape is clearly evolving," said Mr. Weissenberg. "As the Baby Boomers retire and Gen Y comes of age, different tastes and interests are emerging and niche travel markets are going mainstream. These trends are contributing to the overall growth of a strong tourism industry -- while also presenting many

challenges and opportunities for hospitality companies and other industry participants.” He noted the upcoming holiday season will be one beneficiary of this trend: almost two-thirds plan to travel between Thanksgiving and New Year's, with almost one-third taking two or more trips during this period, which represents an increase over last year's holiday season. (*Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole e-newsletter*)